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ABSTRACT

An informal, non-standardized, 83-item instrument for measuring students' attitudes toward education was administered. Pupils indicated strong agreement, agreement, disagreement, or strong disagreement toward the following aspects of school: teacher, learning, school social structure and climate, peer, and general. Results are listed according to grade, sex, school, and academic or non-academic curriculum. A copy of the instrument is included. (DLG)

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RESEARCH REPORT

A Survey of Student Attitudes Towards Two Vancouver Secondary Schools

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Allan G. Moodie

Research Report 71-25

Department of Planning and Evaluation
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1595 West 10th Avenue
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A SURVEY OF STUDENT ATTITUDES TOWARDS TWO VANCOUVER SECONDARY SCHOOLS

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Introduction

An informal instrument called the School Sentiment Index[1] was administered to students to evaluate their attitudes towards education in two Vancouver secondary schools. The Index (see Appendix A) consists of 83 statements regarding various aspects of school to which students respond by indicating either strong agreement, agreement, disagreement or strong disagreement. This self-report device attempts to measure students' attitudes towards the following five aspects of school.

1. Teacher, which can be subdivided into:
   (a) Mode of Instruction,
   (b) Authority and Control, and
   (c) Interpersonal Relationships.
2. Learning,
3. School Social Structure and Climate,
4. Peer, and
5. General,

Administration and Interpretation of the School Sentiment Index

During the administration of the School Sentiment Index, students rated each statement by marking their responses in pencil on separate I. B. M. 1230 answer sheets. Alternate responses to each statement were tallied by computer at Simon Fraser University and the numerical values of "1", "2", "3" and "4" as outlined by the Index instructions were assigned to each tallied alternate response. Alternate responses which reflected a positive attitude received the values of "3" and "4" whereas negative responses were assigned the values of "1" and "2". The arithmetic means of each section in the Index were calculated by adding the numerically weighted alternate responses for the appropriate statements and dividing the total amount by the number of responses.

The numerical value of "2. 50" is the mean or arithmetic average of the four-point rating scale. Mean values larger than "2. 50" indicate above average ratings whereas mean values smaller than "2. 50" depict below average ratings.

[1] The School Sentiment Index was developed by the Instructional Objectives Exchange of Los Angeles, California.

The alternate responses have been analyzed in student groups that have been specified by the principal of each school. The following tables portray students' attitudes on a relative basis about various aspects of two secondary schools which have been assigned the lettered designations "A" and "B" to maintain anonymity.

Limitations of the School Sentiment Index

As norms for the Index are not available on a national or local basis, clearly defined reference points cannot be established for evaluating the mean numerical ratings. Consequently, these ratings should be interpreted conservatively as the Index is an informal non-standardized instrument for measuring students' attitudes.

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MEAN RATINGS BY GROUPS OF STUDENTS IN SCHOOL "A" ON SUBSCALES OF THE SCHOOL SENTIMENT INDEX, JANUARY, 1971.

		SUBSCALES								
		Teacher								
Student Groups	N	Mode of Instruction	Authority & Control	Interpersonal Relationships	Teacher (whole subscale)	Learning	School Social Structure & Climate	Peer	General	TOTAL
Grade 8										
Non-Academic	19	2.66	2.80	2.65	2.69	2.55	2.77	2.88	2.71	2.71
Academic	71	2.80	2.73	2.68	2.75	2.65	2.84	2.88	2.88	2.78
All Grade 8	90	2.77	2.74	2.68	2.73	2.63	2.82	2.88	2.84	2.77
Grade 9										
Non-Academic	15	2.46	2.63	2.67	2.57	2.56	2.79	2.90	2.71	2.66
Academic	70	2.65	2.69	2.64	2.66	2.54	2.80	2.85	2.80	2.71
All Grade 9	85	2.62	2.68	2.64	2.64	2.54	2.80	2.86	2.79	2.71
Grade 10										
Non-Academic	23	2.34	2.34	2.28	2.34	2.33	2.56	2.76	2.52	2.45
Academic	61	2.59	2.61	2.56	2.59	2.47	2.70	2.69	2.56	2.61
All Grade 10	84	2.53	2.54	2.49	2.52	2.43	2.67	2.71	2.55	2.57
Grade 11										
Non-Academic	11	2.41	2.59	2.34	2.44	2.52	2.65	2.35	2.47	2.49
Academic	50	2.91	2.81	2.73	2.83	2.70	2.78	2.84	2.72	2.79
All Grade 11	61	2.82	2.77	2.66	2.76	2.67	2.76	2.75	2.68	2.74
Grade 12										
Non-Academic	17	2.64	2.81	2.66	2.69	2.54	2.74	2.76	2.61	2.68
Academic	50	2.77	2.95	2.85	2.84	2.62	2.76	2.81	2.66	2.78
All Grade 12	67	2.74	2.91	2.81	2.80	2.60	2.75	2.80	2.64	2.75
Non-Academic	85	2.52	2.62	2.51	2.54	2.49	2.69	2.76	2.61	2.60
Academic	302	2.74	2.75	2.69	2.72	2.59	2.78	2.82	2.73	2.73
All Students	387	2.69	2.72	2.65	2.68	2.57	2.76	2.80	2.71	2.70

Legend: N = Number of Students

MEAN RATINGS BY GROUPS OF STUDENTS IN SCHOOL "B" ON SUBSCALES OF THE SCHOOL SENTIMENT INDEX, SPRING, 1971.

Student Groups	N	SUBSCALES								
		Teacher			Teacher (whole subscale)	Learning	School Social Structure & Climate	Peer	General	TOTAL
		Mode of Instruction	Authority & Control	Interpersonal Relationships						
Non-Academic Girls	258	2.39	2.51	2.34	2.41	2.36	2.34	2.78	2.41	2.41
Non-Academic Boys	249	2.39	2.41	2.25	2.35	2.27	2.28	2.84	2.30	2.36
Academic Girls	283	2.47	2.55	2.42	2.47	2.44	2.45	2.87	2.57	2.51
Academic Boys	372	2.53	2.52	2.43	2.52	2.38	2.45	2.95	2.47	2.51
Girls	541	2.43	2.53	2.38	2.44	2.40	2.40	2.83	2.50	2.46
Boys	621	2.47	2.48	2.36	2.45	2.34	2.38	2.91	2.40	2.45
Non-Academic	507	2.39	2.46	2.30	2.38	2.32	2.31	2.81	2.36	2.39
Academic	655	2.50	2.53	2.43	2.50	2.40	2.45	2.91	2.51	2.51
All Students	1,162	2.45	2.50	2.37	2.45	2.37	2.39	2.87	2.45	2.46

Legend: N = Number of Students

APPENDIX A

SCHOOL SENTIMENT INDEX

SCHOOL SENTIMENT INDEX

Secondary Level

Directions: For each statement, indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree by marking the answer sheet:

A) if you strongly agree

B) if you agree

C) if you disagree

D) if you strongly disagree

1. My teachers rarely explain to me why I deserve the grades I earn on assignments and tests.
2. I do my best in school.
3. My teachers are interested in the things I do outside of school.
4. Each morning I look forward to coming to school.
5. My school has too many rules.
6. My teachers allow students some choice in what they study in class.
7. I often feel rushed and nervous at school.
8. My teachers give assignments that are too difficult.
9. Students here aren't very friendly.
10. My teachers try to make their subjects interesting to me.
11. I hate having to do homework.
12. My teachers are interested in what I have to say.
13. When I'm at school, I'm usually unhappy.
14. This school is run like a prison.
15. In most of my classes, individual students can choose assignments which are interesting to them.
16. If I did something wrong at school, I know I would get a second chance.
17. My teachers give assignments that are just busy-work.
18. I enjoy working on class projects with other students.
19. My teachers really like their subjects.
20. I would rather learn a new sport than play one I already know.
21. My teachers are personally concerned about me.

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22. School depresses me.

23. Whenever I'm called to one of the offices at school, I feel upset.

24. I think there is too much pressure in school.

25. My teachers give me too much work.

26. School is a good place for making friends.

27. My teachers are boring.

28. I like the challenge of a difficult assignment.

29. My teachers don't try to understand young people.

30. I stay home from school whenever I can.

31. My classes are too big.

32. I'm very interested in what goes on at this school.

33. My teachers explain assignments clearly.

34. In school I have to memorize too many facts.

35. The main reason for going to school is to learn.

36. If I had a serious problem, I don't know one teacher in my school I could go to.

37. Students have enough voice in determining how this school is run.

38. My teachers have encouraged me to think for myself.

39. My teachers have been fair to me.

40. I usually don't get involved in many school activities.

41. My teachers won't give me any idea of what will be on their tests.

42. I really like most of the kids at this school.

43. My teachers don't allow me to be creative.

44. Teachers recognize my right to a different opinion.

45. I get tired of listening to my teachers talk all the time.

46. I attend many school events.

47. I like to talk to my teachers after class.

48. I think my teachers are too old-fashioned.

49. I really feel I'm part of my school.

50. My teachers frequently show a lack of preparation.

51. It is difficult for a new student to find friends here.

52. I have a good relationship with most of my teachers.

53. My favorite classes are those in which I learn the most.

54. I would like to go to school all year long.

55. Each September I look forward to the beginning of school.

56. Our school is so large, I often feel lost in the crowd.

57. I usually get the grade I deserve in a class.

58. My teachers are friendly toward the students.

59. I try to do good work in my class.

60. My teachers still respect me as a person even when I've done poorly on my school work.

61. I like school better than my friends do.

62. There's no privacy at school.

63. My teachers let me know what is expected of me.

64. I enjoy the social life here.

65. My teachers grade me fairly.

66. There are many closed groups of students here.

67. My teachers like working with young people.

68. I often buy books with my own money.

69. My teachers are too concerned with discipline.

70. I liked school better when I was in elementary school than I do now.

71. At school, other people really care about me.

72. If I thought I could win, I'd like to run for an elected student body office.

73. My teachers will discuss grade changes with me.

74. My teachers just don't care about students if they're not going to college.

75. I do more school work than just what is assigned.

76. Teachers at my school cannot control their classes.

77. My teachers give me individual help willingly.

78. Lunch time at school is not fun.

79. My teachers are often impatient.

80. If I had the choice, I wouldn't go to school at all.

81. My teachers have "pets".

82. My teachers often waste too much time explaining things.

83. I follow the school rules.